

closed configuration thereof.

Please amend claim 13 as follows:

13. (Amended) The invention of claim 21 wherein each said frame section includes a solid, continuous exterior surface.

Please amend claim 16 as follows:

16. (Amended) The invention of claim 21, which includes:

- a) said frame comprising plastic;
- b) said frame fastener comprising first and second notched latch members each mounted on a respective frame section; and
- c) said frame fastener having an open configuration with said latch members disengaged and a closed configuration with said latch members engaged.

Please amend claim 18 as follows:

18. (Amended) In combination with an air handling system of a heating, ventilating and air conditioning system including a supply duct, a diffuser and a length of flexible duct interconnecting same and including an arcuate bend, the improvement of a sleeve assembly which comprises:

- a) a frame including:
  - 1) opposite first and second ends;
  - 2) an inner radius frame section including an inner radius arc extending

between said ends;

- 3) an inner radius frame section including an outer radius arc extending between said ends;
- 4) an arcuate longitudinal axis extending between said ends in generally parallel relation with respect to said arcs;
- 5) a plurality of annular rings, including a first end ring located adjacent to said frame first end, a second end ring located adjacent to said frame second end and an intermediate ring located between said end rings;
- 6) each said ring lying generally in a plane perpendicular to said longitudinal axis;
- 7) each said ring comprising an inner rib of said inner radius frame section and an outer rib of said outer radius frame section;
- 8) each said frame section including a pair of arcuate side edges; and
- 9) a passage extending between and open at said ends, said passage receiving said flexible duct; and
- b) a plurality of fastener subassemblies each mounted on said frame adjacent to said section side edges, each said fastener subassembly having an open position with said frame sections disengaged and a closed position with said frame sections engaged.

Please add claim 21 as follows:

21. (New) In combination with an air handling system of a heating, ventilating and air conditioning system, including a supply duct, a diffuser and a length of flexible hose interconnecting same and including an arcuate bend, the improvement of a sleeve assembly which comprises:

- a) first and second ends;
- b) a passage extending between and open at said ends, said passage selectively receiving the length of flexible duct;
- c) a frame generally conforming to the exterior shape of the flexible duct and including first and second frame sections; and
- d) a frame fastener for securing said first and second frame sections together with the length of flexible duct located in said passage.

Added  
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Please add claim 22 as follows:

22. (Claim 15 rewritten in independent form).

A sleeve for a length of flexible duct, which comprises:

- a) first and second ends;
- b) a passage extending between and open at said ends, said passage selectively receiving the length of flexible duct;
- c) a frame generally conforming to the exterior shape of the flexible duct and including first and second frame sections;
- d) a frame fastener for securing said first and second frame sections together with the

length of flexible duct located in said passage;

- e) a frame having a longitudinal axis extending between said sleeve ends and a curved configuration curving through an angle in the range of approximately 15 degrees to 180 degrees;
- f) said sleeve ends lie in respective planes generally perpendicular to said sleeve axis;
- g) said frame including said first and second end rings located at said sleeve first and second ends respectively and an intermediate ring located intermediate said first and second end rings;
- h) a plurality of longitudinal members extending between and connecting said rings, said longitudinal members extending in generally parallel relation with respect to said longitudinal axis;
- i) said ring comprises a pair of ribs, each said rib being located in a respective frame section;
- j) a plurality of loops each mounted on a respective rib of a respective end ring; and
- k) a pair of ties each encircling a respective end ring, said ties being received in said loops.

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#### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment supplements the Amendment submitted via Express Mail on June 21, 2001 by providing "CLEAN" versions of the amended and added claims, and by providing "MARKED-UP" versions of the amended claims. The arguments and other remarks were presented in the June 21, 2001 Amendment.

Attached hereto is a "MARKED-UP" version of the changes made to the claims by the